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Game Design Document

A game design document is a living document which describes the intent of the game design. It has two goals, first to document the decisions that have been made about the game and communicate those concepts to the entire team. Thus, it needs to be detailed enough for programmers to refer to when they need clarification about an aspect of the game. It must be able to be updated as the game is to be built. The need to have a game design document increases with the size of the team and length of the project.

For a student project the intent is to capture as much as possible of your design. The game design will be larger than what you can achieve in a semester, but you must then decide what you need to do first. This document should be in version control so that you can see it changing and growing. Given we are using git you could also use @name to assign parts of the design to individual members of the team.

Overview

(Placeholder name for game), *Folk Horror (group)*

Game Concept

The game is about a main character who will have to face different monsters of mythology. Different endings.

- Exploring/Fighting sections, clearing the way for a bossfight
- Defeating bosses, choosing to spare or kill them
- Taking pictures
- Keeping your job? Not losing your house? Smth

Genre

What other games is it like?

- Don't Starve
 - Perspective, art style?
- Cult of the lamb / West of Dead
 - Temporary "builds" which are lost upon exiting the dungeon, but central currency is kept
- Undertale
 - Genocide-/Pacifist route
 - (Some) creative item usage in combat

Target Audience

- Folklore enthusiasts
- (Some) experience with videogames

Game Flow Summary

Purchase permanent upgrades in the town for gold -> Enter the forest, resetting your magical powers and randomizing the sections -> Fight enemies for magical essence and gold -> Use magical essence to gain magical powers -> Find waypoints where you have the option to return to the town with all gold -> Dying returns you to the town with (none?) of your gold -> Defeating a boss returns you to the town with all of your gold

Look and Feel

Don't starve-like artstyle

- Mystical, horror, a little spooky

Gameplay and Mechanics

- Interact with the town between “dungeons”
 - Upgrade their equipment using gold
 - Take on quests and get rewards from completing them
 - Get tips and tricks for the next major boss
 - (Options that impact the story?)
- Fight enemies
 - Alternate between melee and ranged attacks
 - Use magical powers
 - Dodge, dash, parry, reflect?
- Defeat bosses
 - Choose to spare or kill them
 - Creative “finishers” (i.e. use the camera to finish off the Dovregubben)

Gameplay

What is the core of the player's interaction with the game?

- All of the above?
- Rather more difficult fights than tedious

Game progression

- Clearing a section and getting closer to defeating the boss
- Upgrading their gear, getting better stats
- Learning enemy attack patterns (and how to creatively defeat them)

Mission/challenge Structure

- As you get closer to the boss, enemies get more difficult and give larger rewards
- Defeating bosses buffs all other enemies (including the remaining bosses) making the game progressively harder

Puzzle Structure

- Learning how to finish the bosses?

Objectives

- Defeat all the bosses
- Take pictures of all the enemies? (Bestiary?)

Mechanics

What are the rules to the game, both implicit and explicit?

This is the model of the universe that the game works under.

Think of it as a simulation of a world. How do all the pieces interact?

- Blacksmith -> Upgrades the players equipment for gold
- Hermit/Organization -> Gives the player quests: pictures for gold
- See “Gameplay and mechanics”

Physics

How does the physical universe work?

- Swamp tiles/difficult terrain makes you slower?
- Some enemies make the player slow?

Movement

How the player interacts with the game?

- Rolling/Dashing?
- Running?
- Teleporting back to town at waypoints

Objects

What are the objects in the game? How does the player interact with them?

- Items which are usable in combat
 - Camera for taking pictures of enemies for rewards (and stunning them?)
 - Mirror for charming Nøkken?
 - Iron cross for disbanding Huldre??
- Wishing-well(?) for returning to town
- Wishing-well or something else for using magical essence to gain magical powers
- Crossroad-sign(?) for choosing the next section to enter
- Town-related objects

Actions

What are the other interactions the player has with the game world?

- Talking to npcs
- The player's choices regarding sparing or killing bosses might impact the game-world?

Combat

If there is combat or conflict, how is this specifically modeled?

- 2.5D
- Two main attacks, melee and ranged
- Magic powers which are on a cooldown (mana-based? Only time-based? Passive?)
- I-frames, buffs, debuffs
- Knockback

Economy

What is the economy of the game? How does it work?

- Gold / \$ / Cash money
- Fantasy credits, The currency of the corporate forrest world 8)
- Magical essence (Trolldom?), which is only kept on a “dungeon” basis

Screen Flow

A graphical description of how each screen is related to every other and a description of the purpose of each screen.

- Town-screen
- 2.5D combat-screen
- (Select next section screen? Or zoom in on crossroads)
- Dialogue screen / Text on screen
- Map-screen / journal / bestiary? (Sketch-shader on map)
- Menu-/pause screen
- Upgrade-/shop/”level up” screens

Game Options

What are the options and how do they affect gameplay and mechanics?

- Difficulty
- Audio
 - ...
- Graphics
 - Resolution
 - Brightness
 - ...
- Availability
 - Color blindness?
 - TTS?

Replay and Saving

When can you save and exit?

- At any time? Or only in town

Cheats and Easter Eggs

The Story, Setting, and Character

Story and Narrative

- Journalist (freelancer/organization?) with a goal of documenting folklore creatures
- Intro cutscene(?)
- Pacifist/Genocide route alters the characters and environment
 - (Themes of wildlife conservation?)
- Defeating bosses triggers a cutscene?

Game World

- Deep forest, norwegian terrain
- Mountains
- Swampy
- Caves
- Coastal / Lakey

General look and feel of the World

- Spooky
- Modern-old mash

Areas

including the general description and physical characteristics as well as how it relates to the rest of the world (what levels use it, how it connects to other areas).

- Town
- Reffer *Game World

Characters

Each character should include the back story, personality, appearance, animations, abilities, relevance to the story and relationship to other characters.

- Main character
- Townsperson
- Blacksmith

- Hermit/Journalist agent?
- Bosses

Levels

Game world

Playing Levels

Each level should include a synopsis, the required introductory material (and how it is provided), the objectives, and the details of what happens in the level.

Depending on the game, this may include the physical description of the map, the critical path that the player needs to take, and what encounters are important or incidental.

Training level

How is onboarding managed?

Interface

Visual System

If you have a HUD, what is on it? What menus are you displaying? What is the camera model?

- Minimalist hud
- Journal inventory/map/bestiary
- 2.5D Camera

Control System

How does the game player control the game? What are the specific commands?

- WASD movement, controller support?
- No turning camera
- Mouse targeting?

Audio, Music, Sound Effects

- Spooky ambiance
- Sound effects
- Dovregubbens hall

- Voice acting? -> Don't starve / Animal crossing

Help System

No

Artificial Intelligence

yes

Opponent and Enemy AI

The active opponent that plays against the player and therefore requires strategic decision making.

Non-combat and Friendly Characters

yes

Support AI

no?

Player and Collision Detection, Pathfinding.

yes +

Technical ?

Target Hardware

Pc

Development Hardware and Software (including game engine)

Unity

Pc

Network requirements

none

Game Art

very (scary)

Key assets

How are they being developed? Intended style.

This is an extension of parts of cs.unc.edu